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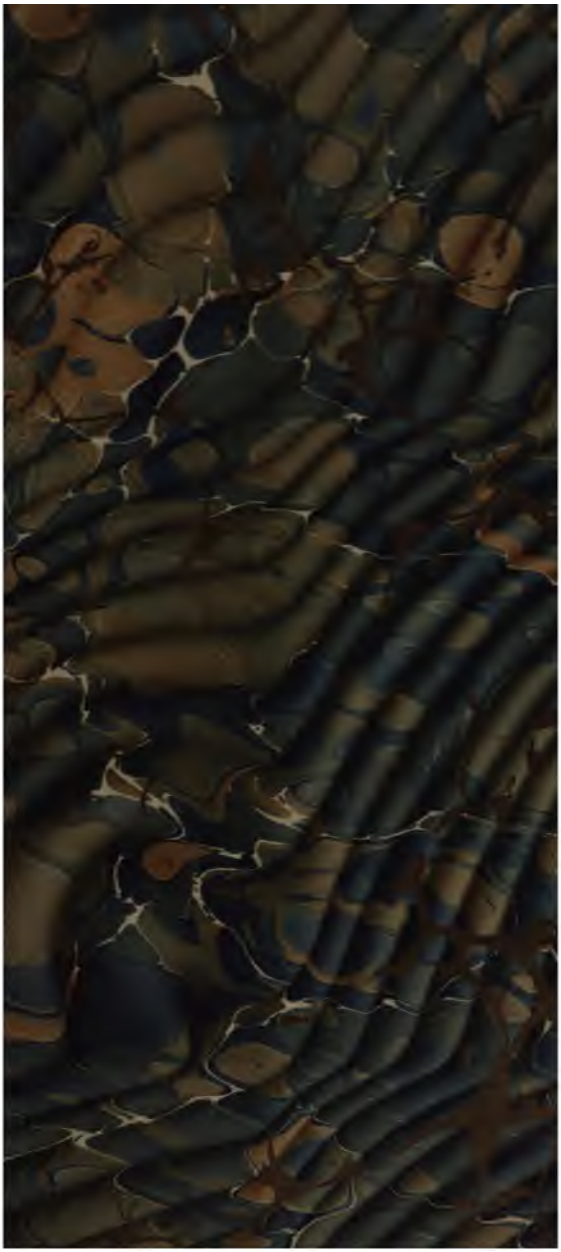

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THE AUTONYM LIBRARY.

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THE UPPER BERTH

BY F. MARION CRAWFORD

THIRD EDITION

T. FISHER UNWIN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE
LONDON 1894

1. *MAD[illegible]LLE IXE.*
2. *STOR[illegible]LEANOR LAMBERT.*
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31. *GOD'S WILL.*
32. *DREAM LIFE AND REAL LIFE.*
33. *THE HOME OF THE DRAGON.*
34. *A [illegible]UNDLE OF LIFE.*
35. *[illegible]'S MARRIAGE.*

The Upper Berth.

SOMEBODY asked for the cigars. We had talked long, and the conversation was beginning to languish; the tobacco smoke had got into the heavy curtains, the wine had got into those brains which were liable to become heavy, and it was already

This One
5FCU-EJH-7HGG

somebody did something
rouse our oppressed spirits,
meeting would soon come
its natural conclusion, and
the guests, would speedily
home to bed, and most
tainly to sleep. No one
said anything very remarkab
it may be that no one
anything very remarkable
say. Jones had given us ev
particular of his last hunt
adventure in Yorkshire.
Tompkins, of Boston,
explained at elaborate len

extended its territory, increased its departmental influence, and transported live stock without starving them to death before the day of actual delivery, but, also, had for years succeeded in deceiving those passengers who bought its tickets into the fallacious belief that the corporation aforesaid was really able to transport human life without destroying it. Signor Tombola had endeavoured to persuade us, by arguments which we took no trouble to oppose, that the unity of his country in no way resembled the average modern torpedo, carefully planned, constructed with all the skill of the greatest Euro-

structed, destined to be dire
by feeble hands into a re
where it must undoubtedly
plode, unseen, unfeared,
unheard, into the illimit
wastes of political chaos.

It is unnecessary to go
further details. The con
sation had assumed proporti
which would have bored I
metheus on his rock, wh
would have driven Tantalu
distraction, and which wo
have impelled Ixion to s
relaxation in the simple

table for hours; we were bored, we were tired, and nobody showed signs of moving.

Somebody called for cigars. We all instinctively looked towards the speaker. Brisbane was a man of five-and-thirty years of age, and remarkable for those gifts which chiefly attract the attention of men. He was a strong man. The external proportions of his figure presented nothing extraordinary to the common eye, though his size was above the average. He was a little over six feet in height, and moderately broad in the shoulder; he did not appear to be stout, but, on the other hand, he was certainly

supported by a strong
sinewy neck ; his broad
cular hands appeared to p
a peculiar skill in brea
walnuts without the assis
of the ordinary cracker,
seeing him in profile, one c
not help remarking the e
ordinary breadth of his sle
and the unusual thickness c
chest. He was one of t
men who are commonly sp
of among men as decept
that is to say, that thoug
looked exceedingly strong

thin, his eyes are blue, his nose is large, he has a small moustache, and a square jaw. Everybody knows Brisbane, and when he asked for a cigar everybody looked at him.

"It is a very singular thing," said Brisbane.

Everybody stopped talking. Brisbane's voice was not loud, but possessed a peculiar quality of penetrating general conversation, and cutting it like a knife. Everybody listened. Brisbane, perceiving that he had attracted their general attention, lit his cigar with great equanimity.

"It is very singular," he continued, "that thing about

ing whether anybody ha
a ghost. I have."

"Bosh! What, you?
don't mean to say so, Bris
Well, for a man of his i
gence!"

A chorus of exclam
greeted Brisbane's rema
statement. Everybody
for cigars, and Stubbs, the l
suddenly appeared fron
depths of nowhere w
fresh bottle of dry cham
The situation was s
Brisbane was going to

have my favourites. Most men have their favourites. I have seen a man wait in a Broadway bar for three-quarters of an hour for a particular car which he liked. I believe the bar-keeper made at least one-third of his living by that man's preference. I have a habit of waiting for certain ships when I am obliged to cross that duck-pond. It may be a prejudice, but I was never cheated out of a good passage but once in my life. I remember it very well; it was a warm morning in June, and the Custom House officials, who were hanging about waiting for a steamer already on her way up from

peculiarly hazy and thou
appearance. I had not
luggage — I never hav
mingled with the crov
passengers, porters, and of
individuals in blue coat
brass buttons, who seem
spring up like mushrooms
the deck of a moored st
to obtrude their unnec
services upon the indepe
passenger. I have often n
with a certain interest the
taneous evolution of thes
lows. They are not there

appeared from deck and gangway as completely as though they had been consigned to that locker which tradition unanimously ascribes to Davy Jones. But, at the moment of starting, they are there, clean-shaved, blue-coated, and ravenous for fees. I hastened on board. The *Kamtschatka* was one of my favourite ships. I say was, because she emphatically no longer is. I cannot conceive of any inducement which could entice me to make another voyage in her. Yes, I know what you are going to say. She is uncommonly clean in the run aft, she has enough bluffing off in the bows to keep her dry,

of them double. She ha
of advantages, but I won'
in her again. Excuse t
gression. I got on boa
hailed a steward, whos
nose and redder whisker
equally familiar to me.

"One hundred and five,
berth," said I, in the bu
like tone peculiar to me
think no more of crossi
Atlantic than taking a v
cocktail at down town
monico's.

The steward took my

tained by the most eminent divines that even miracles cannot change the course of nature. I have no hesitation in saying that he did not turn pale; but, from his expression, I judged that he was either about to shed tears, to sneeze, or to drop my portmanteau. As the latter contained two bottles of particularly fine old sherry presented to me for my voyage by my old friend Snigginson van Pickyns, I felt extremely nervous. But the steward did none of these things.

"Well, I'm d——d!" said he in a low voice, and led the way.

I supposed my Hermes, as

had had a little grog, bu
nothing, and followed
105 was on the port sid
aft. There was nothi
markable about the state
The lower berth, like n
those upon the *Kamts*
was double. There was
of room; there was the
washing apparatus, cal
to convey an idea of lux
the mind of a North-An
Indian; there were the
inefficient racks of brown
in which it is more e

fully folded together those blankets which a great modern humorist has aptly compared to cold buckwheat cakes. The question of towels was left entirely to the imagination. The glass decanters were filled with a transparent liquid faintly tinged with brown, but from which an odour less faint, but not more pleasing, ascended to the nostrils, like a far-off sea-sick reminiscence of oily machinery. Sad-coloured curtains half-closed the upper berth. The hazy June daylight shed a faint illumination upon the desolate little scene. Ugh! how I hate that state-room!

The steward deposited my

th gh he nted to
—probably in search
passengers and more
is always a good plar
in favour with those
aries, and I accordin
him certain coins t
then.

"I'll try and make
fortable all I can," he r
as he put the coin
pocket. Neverthele
was a doubtful into
his voice which surp
Possibly his scale of

it, he was "the better for a glass." I was wrong, however, and did the man injustice.

II.

NOTHING especially worthy of mention occurred during that day. We left the pier punctually, and it was very pleasant to be fairly under way, for the weather was warm and sultry, and the

duced a refreshing
Everybody knows wh
first day at sea is like.
pace the decks and st
each other, and occas
meet acquaintances who
did not know to be on
There is the usual unce
as to whether the food
good, bad, or indifferen
the first two meals have
matter beyond a doubt;
the usual uncertainty ab
weather, until the ship i
off Fire Island. The

wards the door, and each old sailor breathes more freely as his sea-sick neighbour rushes from his side, leaving him plenty of elbow room and an unlimited command over the mustard.

One passage across the Atlantic is very much like another, and we who cross very often do not make the voyage for the sake of novelty. Whales and icebergs are indeed always objects of interest, but, after all, one whale is very much like another whale, and one rarely sees an iceberg at close quarters. To the majority of us the most delightful moment of the day on board an ocean steamer

turn on deck, have smok
last cigar, and having su
in tiring ourselves, feel at
to turn in with a cle
science. On that first n
the voyage I felt parti
lazy, and went to bed
rather earlier than I usu
As I turned in, I was
to see that I was to
companion. A portm
very like my own, lay
opposite corner, and
upper berth had been de
a neatly folded rug with

mined to have a look at him.

Before I had been long in bed he entered. He was, as far as I could see, a very tall man, very thin, very pale, with sandy hair and whiskers and colourless grey eyes. He had about him, I thought, an air of rather dubious fashion; the sort of man you might see in Wall Street, without being able precisely to say what he was doing there—the sort of man who frequents the Café Anglais, who always seems to be alone and who drinks champagne; you might meet him on a race-course, but he would never appear to be doing anything

dressed—a little odd.
are three or four of his k
every ocean steamer. I
up my mind that I did n
to make his acquaintanc
I went to sleep saying to
that I would study his
in order to avoid him.
rose early, I would rise la
he went to bed late, I wo
to bed early. I did not
know him. If you once
people of that kind th
always turning up. Poor f
I need not have take

THE UPPER BERTH.

I was sleeping soundly when I was suddenly waked by a loud noise. To judge from the sound, my room-mate must have sprung with a single leap from the upper berth to the floor. I heard him fumbling with the latch and bolt of the door, which opened almost immediately, and then I heard his footsteps as he ran at full speed down the passage, leaving the door open behind him. The ship was rolling a little, and I expected to hear him stumble or fall, but he ran as though he were running for his life. The door swung on its hinges with the motion of the vessel, and the sound annoyed

and groped my way ba
my berth in the darkn
went to sleep again;
have no idea how l
slept.

When I awoke it wa
quite dark, but I felt a dis
able sensation of cold,
seemed to me that the a
damp. You know the p
smell of a cabin which ha
wet with sea water. I c
myself up as well as I
and dozed off again, fr
complaints to be made th

berth. He had probably returned while I was asleep. Once I thought I heard him groan, and I argued that he was sea-sick. That is particularly unpleasant when one is below. Nevertheless I dozed off and slept till early daylight.

The ship was rolling heavily, much more than on the previous evening, and the grey light which came in through the porthole changed in tint with every movement according as the angle of the vessel's side turned the glass seawards or skywards. It was very cold—unaccountably so for the month of June. I turned my head

saw to my surprise th
wide open and hooked
believe I swore audibly
I got up and shut it
turned back I glance
upper berth. The
were drawn close t
my companion had
felt cold as well as I.
me that I had slept
The state-room was un
able, though, strange t
could not smell the d
which had annoyed m
night. My room-m

cloudy, with an oily smell on the water. It was seven o'clock as I came out—much later than I had imagined. I came across the doctor, who was taking his first sniff of the morning air. He was a young man from the West of Ireland—a tremendous fellow, with black hair and blue eyes, already inclined to be stout; he had a happy-go-lucky, healthy look about him which was rather attractive.

"Fine morning," I remarked, by way of introduction.

"Well," said he, eyeing me with an air of ready interest, "it's a fine morning and it's not a fine morning. I don't think it's much of a morning."

fine," said I.

"It's just what I call
weather," replied the do

"It was very col
night, I thought," I rer
"However, when I
about, I found that th
hole was wide open.
not noticed it when I v
bed. And the state-roo
damp, too."

"Damp!" said he. "
abouts are you?"

"One hundred and fiv

To my surprise the

"only everybody has complained of that state-room for the last three trips."

"I shall complain too," I said. "It has certainly not been properly aired. It is a shame!"

"I don't believe it can be helped," answered the doctor. "I believe there is something ——well, it is not my business to frighten passengers."

"You need not be afraid of frightening me," I replied. "I can stand any amount of damp. If I should get a bad cold I will come to you."

I offered the doctor a cigar, which he took and examined very critically.

damp," he remarked. "H
ever, I dare say you will ge
very well. Have you a ro
mate?"

"Yes; a deuce of a fel
who bolts out in the middl
the night, and leaves the c
open."

Again the doctor glar
curiously at me. Then he
the cigar and looked grave.

"Did he come back?"
asked presently.

"Yes. I was asleep, bu
ıked up, and heard him m

quietly, "I don't care much for this ship. I don't care a rap for her reputation. I tell you what I will do. I have a good-sized place up here. I will share it with you, though I don't know you from Adam."

I was very much surprised at the proposition. I could not imagine why he should take such a sudden interest in my welfare. However, his manner as he spoke of the ship, was peculiar.

"You are very good, doctor, I said. "But really, I believe even now the cabin could be aired, or cleaned out, or something. Why do you not care for the ship?"

our profession, sir," re
doctor. "But the se
people so. I don't
prejudice you, and I do
to frighten you, but
will take my advice
move in here. I would
see you overboard," h
earnestly, "as know t
or any other man was
in 105."

"Good gracious!
I asked.

"Just because on
three trips the peop

and exceedingly unpleasant, I confess. I looked hard at the doctor to see whether he was making game of me, but he looked perfectly serious. I thanked him warmly for his offer, but told him I intended to be the exception to the rule by which every one who slept in that particular state-room went overboard. He did not say much, but looked as grave as ever, and hinted that, before we got across, I should probably reconsider his proposal. In the course of time we went to breakfast, at which only an inconsiderable number of passengers assembled. I noticed that one or two of the officers who

grave. After breakfas
into my state-room in
get a book. The cur
the upper berth we
closely drawn. Not
was to be heard. My
mate was probably stil

As I came out I
steward whose busines
to look after me. He w
that the captain wante
me, and then scuttle
down the passage as
anxious to avoid any q
I went toward the

I answered that I would do anything to oblige him.

"Your room-mate has disappeared," he said. "He is known to have turned in early last night. Did you notice anything extraordinary in his manner?"

The question coming, as it did, in exact confirmation of the fears the doctor had expressed half an hour earlier, staggered me.

"You don't mean to say he has gone overboard?" I asked.

"I fear he has," answered the captain.

"This is the most extraordinary thing——" I began.

"Why?" he asked.

I explained. In a
another question
captain, I explained
mentioning the docto
had heard the story c
105. He seemed ve
annoyed at hearing tha
of it. I told him
occurred in the night

"What you say," h
"coincides almost exa
what was told me by t
mates of two of t
three. They bolt ou
and run down the
Two of them were se
overboard by the wa

however, saw or heard the man who was lost last night—if he is really lost. The steward, who is a superstitious fellow, perhaps, and expected something to go wrong, went to look for him this morning, and found his berth empty, but his clothes lying about, just as he had left them. The steward was the only man on board who knew him by sight, and he has been searching everywhere for him. He has disappeared! Now, sir, I want to beg you not to mention the circumstance to any of the passengers; I don't want the ship to get a bad name, and nothing hangs about an ocean-goer like stories

your choice of any one
officers' cabins you like, i
ing my own, for the rest
passage. Is that a fair bar

"Very," said I; "and
much obliged to you.
since I am alone, and hav
state-room to myself, I
rather not move. If the
ard will take out that
tunate man's things, I wo
lief stay where I am.
not say anything abou
matter, and I think I
promise you that I wil

alone to being the chum of any officer on board. I do not know whether I acted foolishly, but if I had taken his advice I should have had nothing more to tell. There would have remained the disagreeable coincidence of several suicides occurring among men who had slept in the same cabin, but that would have been all.

That was not the end of the matter, however, by any means. I obstinately made up my mind that I would not be disturbed by such tales, and I even went so far as to argue the question with the captain. There was something wrong about the state-room, I said. It was

had been left open last
My room-mate might
been ill when he ca
board, and he might ha
come delirious after he w
bed. He might even r
hiding somewhere on
and might be found later
place ought to be aired a
fastening of the port lool
If the captain would gi
leave, I would see that
thought necessary were
immediately.

"Of course you have

place up, and be done with it."

I did not see it in the same light, and left the captain, after promising to be silent concerning the disappearance of my companion. The latter had had no acquaintances on board, and was not missed in the course of the day. Towards evening I met the doctor again, and he asked me whether I had changed my mind. I told him I had not.

"Then you will before long," he said, very gravely.

III.

WE played whist in the evening, and I went to bed late. I will confess now that I felt a disagreeable sensation when I entered my state-room. I could not help thinking of the tall man I had seen on the previous night, who was now

hundred miles astern.
face rose very distinctly
me as I undressed, and
went so far as to draw
the curtains of the upper
as though to persuade
that he was actually go
also bolted the door o
state-room. Suddenly I b
aware that the porthol
open, and fastened back.
was more than I could
I hastily threw on my dre
gown and went in sear
Robert, the steward of

the door of 105, and pushed him towards the open porthole.

"What the deuce do you mean, you scoundrel, by leaving that port open every night? Don't you know it is against the regulations? Don't you know that if the ship heeled and the water began to come in, ten men could not shut it? I will report you to the captain, you blackguard, for endangering the ship!"

I was exceedingly wroth. The man trembled and turned pale, and then began to shut the round glass plate with the heavy brass fittings.

"Why don't you answer me?" I said, roughly.

Robert, there's not
board as can keep this '
shut at night. You ca
yourself, sir. I ain't a-g
stop hany longer on b
this vessel, sir; I ain't,
But if I was you, sir,
clear out and go and sle
the surgeon, or someth
would. Look 'ere, sir,
fastened what you m
securely, or not, sir? '
sir, see if it will move a

I tried the port, and f
perfectly tight.

"Well, sir,"

hour it will be open again; fastened back, too, sir, that's the horful thing — fastened back!"

I examined the great screw and the looped nut that ran on it.

"If I find it open in the night, Robert, I will give you a sovereign. It is not possible. You may go."

"Soverin' did you say, sir? Very good, sir. Thank ye, sir. Good night, sir. Pleasant reepose, sir, and all manner of hinchantin' dreams, sir."

Robert scuttled away, delighted at being released. Of course, I thought he was trying to account for his negligence

frighten me, and I dis
him. The consequen
that he got his soverei
I spent a very peculia
pleasant night.

I went to bed, a
minutes after I had
myself up in my b
the inexorable Robert
guished the light that
steadily behind the g
glass pane near the do
lay quite still in the da
ing to go to sleep, but
found that impossible.

had at first experienced when I thought of the drowned man who had been my chum ; but I was no longer sleepy, and I lay awake for some time, occasionally glancing at the porthole, which I could just see from where I lay, and which, in the darkness, looked like a faintly-luminous soup-plate suspended in blackness. I believe I must have lain there for an hour, and, as I remember, I was just dozing into sleep when I was roused by a draught of cold air, and by distinctly feeling the spray of the sea blown upon my face. I started to my feet, and not having allowed in the dark for the motion of the

upon the couch wh
placed beneath the
I recovered myself imm
however, and climbed u
knees. The porthole w
wide open and fastened

Now these things a
I was wide awake whe
up, and I should certai
been waked by the fal
still been dozing. M
I bruised my elbows an
badly, and the bruis
there on the following
to testify to the fact if

that I remember very well feeling astonishment rather than fear when I discovered it. I at once closed the plate again, and screwed down the loop nut with all my strength. It was very dark in the state-room. I reflected that the port had certainly been opened within an hour after Robert had at first shut it in my presence, and I determined to watch it, and see whether it would open again. Those brass fittings are very heavy and by no means easy to move ; I could not believe that the clump had been turned by the shaking of the screw. I stood peering out through the thick glass at the

alternate white and grey streaks of the sea that foamed beneath the ship's side. I must have remained there a quarter of an hour.

Suddenly, as I stood, I distinctly heard something moving behind me in one of the berths, and a moment afterwards, just as I turned instinctively to look —though I could, of course, see nothing in the darkness— I heard a very faint groan. I sprang across the state-room, and tore the curtains of the upper berth aside, thrusting in my hands to discover if there were any one there. There was some one.

I remember that the sensa-

tion as I put my hands forward was as though I were plunging them into the air of a damp cellar, and from behind the curtains came a gust of wind that smelled horribly of stagnant sea-water. I laid hold of something that had the shape of a man's arm, but was smooth, and wet, and icy cold. But suddenly, as I pulled, the creature sprang violently forward against me, a clammy, oozy mass, as it seemed to me, heavy and wet, yet endowed with a sort of supernatural strength. I reeled across the state-room, and in an instant the door opened and the thing rushed out. I

covering myself, I
through the door anc
chase at the top of my
but I was too late. Ter
before me I could see—
sure I saw it—a dark s
moving in the dimly l
passage, quickly as the s
of a fast horse thrown be
dog-cart by the lamp on a
night. But in a moment
disappeared, and I found r
holding on to the polishe
that ran along the bull
where the pas ge turne

my face. I am not ashamed of it in the least: I was very badly frightened.

Still I doubted my senses, and pulled myself together. It was absurd, I thought. The Welsh rare-bit I had eaten had disagreed with me. I had been in a nightmare. I made my way back to my state-room, and entered it with an effort. The whole place smelled of stagnant sea-water, as it had when I had waked on the previous evening. It required my utmost strength to go in, and grope among my things for a box of wax lights. As I lighted a railway reading lantern which I always carry in

the porthole was a
and a sort of creep
began to take posses
which I never felt
wish to feel again.
a light and proceed
amine the upper ber
ing to find it dren
sea-water.

But I was dis
The bed had been
and the smell of th
strong; but the be
as dry as a bone.
that Robert had no
courage to make the

dream. I drew the curtains back as far as I could and examined the place very carefully. It was perfectly dry. But the porthole was open again. With a sort of dull bewilderment of horror, I closed it and screwed it down, and thrusting my heavy stick through the brass loop, wrenched it with all my might, till the thick metal began to bend under the pressure. Then I hooked my reading lantern into the red velvet at the head of the couch, and sat down to recover my senses if I could. I sat there all night, unable to think of rest—hardly able

not believe it would n
again without the ap
of a considerable force

The morning dawne
and I dressed myself
thinking over all that h
pened in the night. I
beautiful day and I
deck, glad to get out
early, pure sunshine,
smell the breeze from
water, so different fr
noisome, stagnant od
my state-room. Insti
I turned aft, towar
surgeon's cabin. Th

airing precisely as on the preceding day.

"Good-morning," said he, quietly, but looking at me with evident curiosity.

"Doctor, you were quite right," said I. "There is something wrong about that place."

"I thought you would change your mind," he answered, rather triumphantly. "You have had a bad night, eh? Shall I make you a pick-me-up? I have a capital recipe."

"No, thanks," I cried. "But I would like to tell you what happened."

I then tried to explain as clearly as possible precisely

scared as I had ne
scared in my whole lif
I dwelt particularly
phenomenon of the
which was a fact to
could testify, even if
had been an illusion.
closed it twice in th
and the second time
actually bent the
wrenching it with m
I believe I insisted a g
on this point.

"You seem to thin

it in the least. I renew my invitation to you. Bring your traps here, and take half my cabin."

"Come and take half of mine for one night," I said. "Help me to get at the bottom of this thing."

"You will get to the bottom of something else if you try," answered the doctor.

"What?" I asked.

"The bottom of the sea. I am going to leave this ship. It is not canny."

"Then you will not help me to find out——"

"Not I," said the doctor, quickly. "It is my business to keep my wits about me—

ghosts and things.

"Do you really bel
ghost?" I inquired, r
temptuously. But a
I remembered very
horrible sensation of
natural which had g
sion of me during t
The doctor turned s
me—

"Have you any
explanation of these
offer?" he asked. "
have not. Well, you
will find an explanatio
that you won't, sir, si
cause there is not any.

science, mean to tell me that such things cannot be explained?"

"I do," he answered, stoutly. "And, if they could, I would not be concerned in the explanation."

I did not care to spend another night alone in the state-room, and yet I was obstinately determined to get at the root of the disturbances. I do not believe there are many men who would have slept there alone, after passing two such nights. But I made up my mind to try it, if I could not get any one to share a watch with me. The doctor was evidently not inclined for

he was a surgeon, and
case any accident occu
board he must be al
readiness. He cou
afford to have his
unsettled. Perhaps h
quite right, but I am i
to think that his pre
was prompted by his
tion. On inquiry, he in
me that there was no
board who would be li
join me in my investig
and after a little mor
versation I left him.
later I met the

leave to have the light burning all night, and would try it alone.

"Look here," said he, "I will tell you what I will do. I will share your watch myself, and we will see what happens. It is my belief that we can find out between us. There may be some fellow skulking on board, who steals a passage by frightening the passengers. It is just possible that there may be something queer in the carpentering of that berth."

I suggested taking the ship's carpenter below and examining the place; but I was overjoyed at the captain's offer to spend the night with me. He

anything I required. W
below at once. I had a
bedding cleared out o
upper berth, and we exa
the place thoroughly to
there was a board loose
where, or a panel which
be opened or pushed
We tried the planks
where, tapped the flo
unscrewed the fittings o
lower berth and took
pieces — in short, there
not a square inch of the
room which was not se

were finishing our work, Robert came to the door and looked in.

"Well, sir — find anything, sir?" he asked with a ghastly grin.

"You were right about the porthole, Robert," I said, and I gave him the promised sovereign. The carpenter did his work silently and skilfully, following my directions. When he had done he spoke.

"I'm a plain man, sir," he said. "But it's my belief you had better just turn out your things, and let me run half a dozen four inch screws through the door of this cabin. There's no good never came o' this cabin yet, sir, and that's all about it.

and that in four trips
give it up, sir—bette
up!"

"I will try it for c
more," I said.

"Better give it u
better give it up!
precious bad job," repe
workman, putting his
his bag and leaving the

But my spirits had ri
siderably at the pros
having the captain's c
and I made up my min
be prevented from goin
end of the strange busi

not even join in the customary game of whist. I wanted to be quite sure of my nerves, and my vanity made me anxious to make a good figure in the captain's eyes.

IV.

THE captain was one of those splendidly tough and cheerful specimens of seafaring humanity whose combined courage, hardihood, and calmness in difficulty leads them naturally into high positions of trust. He was not the man to be led away by an

he was willing to join
the investigation was pro
he thought there was som
seriously wrong, which
not be accounted for on o
theories, nor laughed dov
common superstition. T
extent, too, his reputatic
at stake, as well as the r
tion of the ship. It is n
thing to lose passengers
board, and he knew it.

About ten o'clock
evening, as I was smok
last cigar, he came up t
and drew me aside fro

"This is a serious matter, Mr. Brisbane," he said. "We must make up our minds either way—to be disappointed or to have a pretty rough time of it. You see, I cannot afford to laugh at the affair, and I will ask you to sign your name to a statement of whatever occurs. If nothing happens to-night we will try it again to-morrow and next day. Are you ready?"

So we went below, and entered the state-room. As we went in I could see Robert the steward, who stood a little further down the passage, watching us, with his usual grin, as though certain that something dreadful was about

"Supposing we
portmanteau before t
he suggested. "One
sit on it. Nothing c
then. Is the port
down?"

I found it as I had
the morning. Indeed
using a lever, as I had
one could have open
drew back the curtai
upper berth so that I
well into it. By the
advice I lighted my
lantern, and placed i
it shone upon the wh

that he wished to be able to swear that he had sat before the door.

Then he requested me to search the state-room thoroughly, an operation very soon accomplished, as it consisted merely in looking beneath the lower berth and under the couch below the porthole. The spaces were quite empty.

"It is impossible for any human being to get in," I said, "or for any human being to open the port."

"Very good," said the captain, calmly. "If we see anything now, it must be either imagination or something supernatural."

the lower berth.

"The first time it
said the captain, cros
and leaning back
door, "was in M
passenger who slep
the upper berth, tur
have been a luna
events, he was know
been a little touche
had taken his passa
the knowledge of h
He rushed out in the
the night, and thre
overboard, before t
who had the watch
him. We stopped an

came on; but we could not find him. Of course his suicide was afterwards accounted for on the ground of his insanity."

"I suppose that often happens?" I remarked, rather absently.

"Not often—no," said the captain; "never before in my experience, though I have heard of it happening on board of other ships. Well, as I was saying, that occurred in March. On the very next trip——what are you looking at?" he asked, stopping suddenly in his narration.

I believe I gave no answer. My eyes were riveted upon the porthole. It seemed to me

beginning to turn ve
upon the screw—so
however, that I was
it moved at all. I w
intently, fixing its po
my mind, and trying
tain whether it changed
where I was looking, th
looked, too.

"It moves!" he e
in a tone of conviction
it does not," he adde
minute.

"If it were the jarri
screw," said I, "it wo
opened during the da
found it this evening

was certainly loosened, for by an effort I could move it with my hands.

"The queer thing," said the captain, "is that the second man who was lost is supposed to have got through that very port. We had a terrible time over it. It was in the middle of the night, and the weather was very heavy; there was an alarm that one of the ports was open and the sea running in. I came below and found everything flooded, the water pouring in every time she rolled, and the whole port swinging from the top bolts—not the porthole in the middle. Well, we managed to shut it, but the

since that the place
sea-water from time
We supposed the pass
thrown himself out, th
Lord only knows ho
it. The steward ke
me that he cannot k
thing shut here. U
word—I can smell
cannot you?" he
sniffing the air suspic
"Yes—distinctly,"
and I shuddered as t
odour of stagnant
grew stronger in th
"Now, to smell like
place must be damp,

this morning everything was perfectly dry. It is most extraordinary—hallo!"

My reading lantern, which had been placed in the upper berth, was suddenly extinguished. There was still a good deal of light from the pane of ground glass near the door, behind which loomed the regulation lamp. The ship rolled heavily, and the curtain of the upper berth swung far out into the state-room and back again. I rose quickly from my seat on the edge of the bed, and the captain at the same moment started to his feet with a loud cry of surprise. I had turned with the intention

exclamation, and imme
afterwards his call for
I sprang towards him
was wrestling with a
might, with the brass l
the port. It seemed t
against his hands in spite
his efforts. I caught
cane, a heavy oak s
always used to carry
thrust it through the ri
bore on it with all my st
But the strong wood s
suddenly, and I fell up
couch. When I rose ag

"There is something in that berth!" he cried, in a strange voice, his eyes almost starting from his head. "Hold the door, while I look—it shall not escape us, whatever it is!"

But instead of taking his place, I sprang upon the lower bed, and seized something which lay in the upper berth.

It was something ghostly, horrible beyond words, and it moved in my grip. It was like the body of a man long drowned, and yet it moved, and had the strength of ten men living; but I gripped it with all my might—the slippery, oozy, horrible thing—

the putrid odour o
water was about
shiny hair hung i
curls over its de
wrestled with the c
it thrust itself up
forced me back
broke my arms; it
corpse's arms abou
the living death,
powered me, so tha
cried aloud and fe
my hold.

As I fell the th
across me, and seem
itself upon the capt

It seemed to me that he struck a violent blow at the dead being, and then he, too, fell forward upon his face, with an inarticulate cry of horror.

The thing paused an instant, seeming to hover over his prostrate body, and I could have screamed again for very fright, but I had no voice left. The thing vanished suddenly, and it seemed to my disturbed senses that it made its exit through the open port, though how that was possible, considering the smallness of the aperture, is more than any one can tell. I lay a long time upon the floor, and the captain lay beside me. At last I partially recovered

BY THE WATERS OF PARADISE.

BY THE WATERS OF PARADISE.

By the Waters of Paradise.

I REMEMBER my childhood very distinctly. I do not think that the fact argues a good memory, for I have never been clever at learning words by heart, in prose or rhyme; so that I believe my remembrance of events depends much more

than upon my posse
special facility for
them. Perhaps I am
ginative, and the ea
pressions I received
kind to stimulate the
tion abnormally. A l
of little misfortunes,
with each other so as t
a sort of weird fatality,
upon my melancholy
ment when I was a
before I was of age, I
believed myself to be
curse, and not only m
my whole family, a
individual who bore n

and all his predecessors had been born, beyond the memory of man. It is a very old house, and the greater part of it was originally a castle, strongly fortified, and surrounded by a deep moat supplied with abundant water from the hills by a hidden aqueduct. Many of the fortifications have been destroyed, and the moat has been filled up. The water from the aqueduct supplies great fountains, and runs down into huge oblong basins in the terraced gardens, one below the other, each surrounded by a broad pavement of marble between the water and the flower-beds. The waste surplus finally

grotto, son thirty y
into a stream, flow
through the park to
dows beyond, and th
distant river. The
were extended a
greatly altered more
hundred years ago, i
of Charles II., but
little has been done t
them, though they
kept in fairly good
cording to our fortun

In the gardens the
races and huge hedg
and evergreen, some
used to be clipped i

lad how I used to try to make out what the trees were cut to represent, and how I used to appeal for explanations to Judith, my Welsh nurse. She dealt in a strange mythology of her own, and peopled the gardens with griffins, dragons, good genii and bad, and filled my mind with them at the same time. My nursery window afforded a view of the great fountains at the head of the upper basin, and on moonlight nights the Welshwoman would hold me up to the glass, and bid me look at the mist and spray rising into mysterious shapes, moving mystically in the white light like living things.

water, she used
sometimes she w
that, if I did not g
Woman of the
steal up to the
and carry me awa
arms.

The place was g
broad basins of w
tall evergreen hed
funereal look, an
stained marble c
the pools might ha
of tombstones. T
weather-beaten wa
without, the dar
sively-furnished r

affected my spirits. I was silent and sad from my childhood. There was a great clock-tower above, from which the hours rang dismally during the day, and tolled like a knell in the dead of night. There was no light nor life in the house, for my mother was a helpless invalid, and my father had grown melancholy in his long task of caring for her. He was a thin, dark man, with sad eyes; kind, I think, but silent and unhappy. Next to my mother, I believe he loved me better than anything on earth, for he took immense pains and trouble in teaching me, and what he taught me I have never forgotten. Perhaps

that may be the
had no nursery
teacher of any l
lived.

I used to be ta
mother every da
times twice a day
at a time. Then
little stool near he
would ask me wh
doing, and what
do. I daresay sh
the seeds of a pro
choly in my nat
looked at me alwa
smile, and kissed n
when I was taken

the nursery. The door was not quite shut, and the Welsh nurse was sitting sewing in the next room. Suddenly I heard her groan, and say in a strange voice, "One — two — one — two!" I was frightened, and I jumped up and ran to the door, barefooted as I was.

"What is it, Judith?" I cried, clinging to her skirts. I can remember the look in her strange dark eyes as she answered.

"One—two leaden coffins, fallen from the ceiling!" she crooned, working herself in her chair. "One—two—a light coffin and a heavy coffin, falling to the floor!"

bed and sang me t
a queer old Welsh s

I do not know
but the impression
me that she had me
father and mother
to die very soon.
in the very room wh
been sitting that nig
a great room, my d
full of sun when ther
and when the days w
was the most cheerfi
the house. My mo
rapidly worse, and I
ferred to another pa

gayer for her, I suppose; but she could not live. She was beautiful when she was dead, and I cried bitterly.

"The light one, the light one—the heavy one to come," crooned the Welshwoman. And she was right. My father took the room after my mother was gone, and day by day he grew thinner and paler and sadder.

"The heavy one, the heavy one—all of lead," moaned my nurse, one night in December, standing still, just as she was going to take away the light after putting me to bed. Then she took me up again, and wrapped me in a little gown, and led me away to my father's

door, and we found
easy-chair before the
white, quite dead.

So I was alone with
woman till strange pe
and relations whom I
seen ; and then I h
saying that I must
away to some mor
place. They were ki
and I will not believe
were kind only beca
to be very rich when
be a man. The wo
seemed to be a very
to me, nor all the pe

not remember that any one ever did me any great injustice, nor that I was ever oppressed or ill-treated in any way, even by the boys at school. I was sad, I suppose, because my childhood was so gloomy, and, later, because I was unlucky in everything I undertook, till I finally believed I was pursued by fate, and I used to dream that the old Welsh nurse and the Woman of the Water between them had vowed to pursue me to my end. But my natural disposition should have been cheerful, as I have often thought.

Among lads of my age I was never last, or even among the last, in anything; but I was

ankle on the day whe
run. If I pulled an
others, my oar was sur
If I competed for
some unforeseen acci
vented my winning
last moment. Not
which I put my hand s
and I got the repu
being unlucky, until
panions felt it was al
to bet against me, n
what the appearances r
I became discouraged
less in everything. I
the idea of competing

thought that I could not fail in the examination for the ordinary degree. The day before the examination began I fell ill; and when at last I recovered, after a narrow escape from death, I turned my back upon Oxford, and went down alone to visit the old place where I had been born, feeble in health and profoundly disgusted and discouraged. I was twenty-one years of age, master of myself and of my fortune; but so deeply had the long chain of small unlucky circumstances affected me, that I thought seriously of shutting myself up from the world to live the life of a hermit, and to

seemed the only c
bility in my exist
thoughts soon d
altogether.

I had never sh
to return to my ov
I had been taken
little boy, and no
pressed me to c
place had been k
after a fashion,
seem to have su
the fifteen years o
absence. Nothing
affect those old gr
had fought the ele
many centuries

about the pools looked more yellow and damp than of old, and the whole place at first looked smaller. It was not until I had wandered about the house and grounds for many hours that I realised the huge size of the home where I was to live in solitude. Then I began to delight in it, and my resolution to live alone grew stronger.

The people had turned out to welcome me, of course, and I tried to recognise the changed faces of the old gardener and the old housekeeper, and to call them by name. My old nurse I knew at once. She had grown very grey since she heard the

years before, bu
eyes were the s
look in them wo
memories. She
house with me.

"And how is
the Water?" I
to laugh a little
still play in the

"She is hung
the Welshwoma
voice.

"Hungry? T
feed her." I laug
Judith turned v
looked at me stra

"Feed her?

ancient housekeeper, who tottered after us with feeble steps through the halls and passages.

I did not think much of her words. She had always talked oddly, as Welshwomen will, and though I was very melancholy I am sure I was not superstitious, and I was certainly not timid. Only, as in a far-off dream, I seemed to see her standing with the light in her hand and muttering, "The heavy one—all of lead," and then leading a little boy through the long corridors to see his father lying dead in a great easy-chair before a smouldering fire. So we went over the house, and I chose the rooms

vants I had bi
ordered and a
thing, and I
trouble. I did
they did, provid
peace, and was r
give directions;
listless than ever
effects of my
lege.

I dined in soli
the melancholy g
vast old dining-
me. Then I wer
I had selected f
and sat down in
under a bright li

choosing, utterly indifferent to the course they might take.

The tall windows of the room opened to the level of the ground upon the terrace at the head of the garden. It was in the end of July, and everything was open, for the weather was warm. As I sat alone I heard the unceasing plash of the great fountains, and I fell to thinking of the Woman of the Water. I rose, and went out into the still night, and sat down upon a seat on the terrace, between two gigantic Italian flower-pots. The air was deliciously soft and sweet with the smell of the flowers, and the garden was more con-

Sad people always
water and the sou
night, though I can
I sat and listened i
for it was dark bel
pale moon had not
over the hills in f
though all the air
light with her ris
Slowly the white
eastern sky ascende
above the wooded cr
the outline of the
more intensely bla
trast, as though t
some great white
rising from behind

to see the moon herself, and I tried to reckon the seconds before she must appear. Then she sprang up quickly, and in a moment more hung round and perfect in the sky. I gazed at her, and then at the floating spray of the tall fountains, and down at the pools, where the water-lilies were rocking softly in their sleep on the velvet surface of the moon-lit water. Just then a great swan floated out silently into the midst of the basin, and wreathed his long neck, catching the water in his broad bill, and scattering showers of diamonds around him.

Suddenly, as I gazed, some-

ight. I looked u
Between me and th
of the moon rose
face of a woman,
strange eyes, and
mouth, full and so
smiling, hooded in b
at me as I sat stil
bench. She was cl
so close that I
touched her with
But I was transfixed
less. She stood
moment, but her ex
not change. Then
swiftly away, and my
up on my head, wh

moved. The moonlight, shining through the tossing spray of the fountain, made traceries of shadow on the gleaming folds of her garments. In an instant she was gone, and I was alone.

I was strangely shaken by the vision, and some time passed before I could rise to my feet, for I was still weak from my illness, and the sight I had seen would have startled any one. I did not reason with myself, for I was certain that I had looked on the unearthly, and no argument could have destroyed that belief. At last I got up and stood unsteadily, gazing in the direction in which

but there was n
seen—nothing b
paths, the tall, d
hedges, the tossin
fountains and the
below. I fell ba
seat and recalled
seen. Strange to
the first impressio
there was nothing
the recollection ;
trary, I felt that
nated by the face
give anything to
I could retrace t
straight features, t
eyes and the wond

detail from memory, I knew that the whole was beautiful, and that I should love a woman with such a face.

"I wonder whether she is the Woman of the Water!" I said to myself. Then rising once more, I wandered down the garden, descending one short flight of steps after another, from terrace to terrace by the edge of the marble basins, through the shadow and through the moonlight; and I crossed the water by the rustic bridge above the artificial grotto, and climbed slowly up again to the highest terrace by the other side. The air seemed sweeter, and I was very calm, so that I

walked, as though a
ness had come to
woman's face seen
before me, and the
it gave me an unw
of pleasure, unlike
had ever felt before.

I turned, as I r
house, and looked
the scene. It had
changed in the short
I had come out, and
had changed with it.
my luck, I thought,
love with a ghost!
times I would have si
gone to bed more sad

almost for the first time in my life. The gloomy old study seemed cheerful when I went in. The old pictures on the walls smiled at me, and I sat down in my deep chair with a new and delightful sensation that I was not alone. The idea of having seen a ghost, and of feeling much the better for it, was so absurd that I laughed softly, as I took up one of the books I had brought with me and began to read.

That impression did not wear off. I slept peacefully, and in the morning I threw open my windows to the summer air, and looked down at the garden, at the stretches

swallows, and at
water.

"A man migh
paradise of this pl
claimed. "A m
woman together!"

From that day tl
no longer seemed g
I think I ceased to
some time, too, I be
an interest in the pl
try and make it mo
avoided my old Wels
she should damp n
with some dismal
and recall my old sel

thought of most was the ghostly figure I had seen in the garden that first night after my arrival. I went out every evening and wandered through the walks and paths ; but, try as I might, I did not see my vision again. At last, after many days, the memory grew more faint, and my old moody nature gradually overcame the temporary sense of lightness I had experienced. The summer turned to autumn, and I grew restless. It began to rain. The dampness pervaded the gardens, and the outer halls smelled musty, like tombs ; the grey sky oppressed me intolerably. I left the place as it

was and went abroad, de
mined to try anything w
might possibly make a sec
break in the monotonous me
choly from which I suffered

II.

MOST people would be struck by the utter insignificance of the small events which, after the death of my parents, influenced my life and made me unhappy. The gruesome forebodings of a Welsh nurse, which chanced to be realised by an odd coincidence of events, should not seem

enough to change the nature
a child, and to direct the be
of his character in after yea
The little disappointments
schoolboy life, and the som
what less childish ones of
uneventful and undistinguish
academic career, should n
have sufficed to turn me c
at one-and-twenty years of a
a melancholic, listless idl
Some weakness of my ov
character may have contribut
to the result, but in a grea
degree it was due to my havi
a reputation for bad luc
However, I will not try
analyse the causes of my sta
for I should satisfy nobo
least of all myself. Still I

will I attempt to explain why I felt a temporary revival of my spirits after my adventure in the garden. It is certain that I was in love with the face I had seen, and that I longed to see it again; that I gave up all hope of a second visitation, grew more sad than ever, packed up my traps, and finally went abroad. But in my dreams I went back to my home, and it always appeared to me sunny and bright, as it had looked on that summer's morning after I had seen the woman by the fountain.

I went to Paris. I went further, and wandered about Germany. I tried to amuse

myself, and I failed misera
With the aimless whims of
idle and useless man, came
sorts of suggestions for g
resolutions. One day I m
up my mind that I would
and bury myself in a Gerr
university for a time, and
simply like a poor student.
started with the intention
going to Leipsic, determi
to stay there until some ev
should direct my life or cha
my humour, or make an
of me altogether. The exp
train stopped at some stat
of which I did not know
name. It was dusk on
winter's afternoon, and I pee
through the thick glass fr

my seat. Suddenly another train came gliding in from the opposite direction, and stopped alongside of ours. I looked at the carriage which chanced to be abreast of mine, and idly read the black letters painted on a white board swinging from the brass handrail: BERLIN—COLOGNE—PARIS. Then I looked up at the window above. I started violently, and the cold perspiration broke out upon my forehead. In the dim light, not six feet from where I sat, I saw the face of a woman, the face I loved, the straight, fine features, the strange eyes, the wonderful mouth, the pale skin. Her head-dress was a dark

veil, which seemed to be t
about her head and passed o
the shoulders under her ch
As I threw down the wind
and knelt on the cushion
seat, leaning far out to get
better view, a long whis
screamed through the stati
followed by a quick series
dull, clanking sounds; th
there was a slight jerk, and
train moved on. Luckily t
window was narrow, being t
one over the seat, beside t
door, or I believe I would ha
jumped out of it then and the
In an instant the speed increase
and I was being carried swift
away in the opposite directi
from the thing I loved.

For a quarter of an hour I lay back in my place, stunned by the suddenness of the apparition. At last one of the two other passengers, a large and gorgeous captain of the White Königsberg Cuirassiers, civilly but firmly suggested that I might shut my window, as the evening was cold. I did so, with an apology, and relapsed into silence. The train ran swiftly on, for a long time, and it was already beginning to slacken speed before entering another station, when I roused myself, and made a sudden resolution. As the carriage stopped before the brilliantly lighted platform, I seized my

belongings, saluted my fellc
passengers, and got out, det
mined to take the first expr
back to Paris.

This time the circumstan
of the vision had been
natural that it did not stri
me that there was anythi
unreal about the face, or abc
the woman to whom it belong
I did not try to explain
myself how the face, and t
woman, could be travelling
a fast train from Berlin to Pa
on a winter's afternoon, wh
both were in my mind indelib
associated with the moonlig
and the fountains in my ov
English home. I certain
would not have admitted th

I had been mistaken in the dusk, attributing to what I had seen a resemblance to my former vision which did not really exist. There was not the slightest doubt in my mind, and I was positively sure that I had again seen the face I loved. I did not hesitate, and in a few hours I was on my way back to Paris. I could not help reflecting on my ill luck. Wandering as I had been for many months, it might as easily have chanced that I should be travelling in the same train with that woman, instead of going the other way. But my luck was destined to turn for a time.

days. I dined at
hotels; I went to
I rode in the Bois
in the morning, an
an acquaintance, w
to drive with me
noon. I went to
Madeleine, and I
services at the Eng
I hung about the
Notre Dame. I w
sailles. I spent ho
ing the Rue de R
neighbourhood of
corner, where fore
and repass from
night. At last I

I found what I had sought so long.

There she was, sitting by an old lady in grey satin and diamonds, who had a wrinkled but kindly face and keen grey eyes that seemed to take in everything they saw, with very little inclination to give much in return. But I did not notice the chaperon. I saw only the face that had haunted me for months, and in the excitement of the moment I walked quickly towards the pair, forgetting such a trifle as the necessity for an introduction.

She was far more beautiful than I had thought, but I never

vision before, this
reality, and I knew
her hair had been co
at last I saw it, and
beauty of its n
glorified the whole v
was rich hair, fine and
golden, with deep r
in it like red bronze
There was no ornar
not a rose, not a thre
and I felt that it need
to enhance its splend
ing but her pale face
strange eyes, and l
eyebrows. I could se

gazing at the moving scene in the midst of the brilliant lights and the hum of perpetual conversation.

I recollected the detail of introduction in time, and turned aside to look for my host. I found him at last. I begged him to present me to the two ladies, pointing them out to him at the same time.

"Yes—uh—by all means—uh—" replied his Excellency with a pleasant smile. He evidently had no idea of my name, which was not to be wondered at.

"I am Lord Cairngorm," I observed.

"Oh—by all means," an-

the same hospita

"Yes—uh—the fact

try and find out wh

such lots of people, y

"Oh, if you will p

I will try and find ou

said I, laughing.

"Ah, yes—so kin

come along," said

We threaded the c

in a few minutes

before the two ladie

"'Lowmintrduce I

gorm," he said; the

quickly to me, "Com

to-morrow, won't y

glided away with his

I sat down beside the beautiful girl, conscious that the eyes of the duenna were upon me.

"I think we have been very near meeting before," I remarked, by way of opening the conversation.

My companion turned her eyes full upon me with an air of inquiry. She evidently did not recall my face, if she had ever seen me.

"Really—I cannot remember," she observed, in a low and musical voice. "When?"

"In the first place, you came down from Berlin by the express, ten days ago. I was going the other way, and our carriages stopped opposite each

dow."

"Yes—we came
but I do not reme
She hesitated.

"Secondly," I co
was sitting alone in
last summer—near
July—do you remem
must have wandere
through the park;
up to the house and
me——"

"Was that you?"
in evident surprise.
broke into a laugh.
everybody I had see
there had never

the next day, and never heard that you had come there; indeed, I did not know the castle belonged to you."

"Where were you staying?" I asked.

"Where? Why, with my aunt, where I always stay. She is your neighbour, since it *is* you."

"I—beg your pardon—but then—is your aunt Lady Bluebell? I did not quite catch——"

"Don't be afraid. She is amazingly deaf. Yes. She is the relict of my beloved uncle, the sixteenth or seventeenth Baron Bluebell—I forget exactly how many of them there have been. And I—do you know

"No," I answ
"I have not the
asked to be introd
I recognised you
perhaps you are
bell?"

"Considering th
neighbour, I will
I am," she answe
I am of the tribe
but my name is La
have been given to
that I was christene
Being a floral fami
me Daisy. A dreadf
man once told me

and an e—because my hair is so thick. I warn you, so that you may avoid making such a bad pun."

"Do I look like a man who makes puns?" I asked, being very conscious of my melancholy face and sad looks.

Miss Lammas eyed me critically.

"No; you have a mournful temperament. I think I can trust you," she answered. "Do you think you could communicate to my aunt the fact that you are a Cairngorm and a neighbour? I am sure she would like to know."

I leaned towards the old lady, inflating my lungs for

"That is not of
use," she remark
can write it on a l
She is utterly deaf."

"I have a pencil,"
"But I have no pap
my cuff do, do you

"Oh, yes!" re
Lammas, with alacr
often do that."

I wrote on my cu
Lammas wishes me
that I am your
Cairngorm." Then
my arm before the
nose. She seemed

words, smiled, nodded, and addressed me in the unearthly voice peculiar to people who hear nothing.

"I knew your grandfather very well," she said. Then she smiled and nodded to me again, and to her niece, and relapsed into silence.

"It is all right," remarked Miss Lammas. "Aunt Bluebell knows she is deaf, and does not say much, like the parrot. You see, she knew your grandfather. How odd, that we should be neighbours! Why have we never met before?"

"If you had told me you knew my grandfather when you

least surprised,"
rather irrelevant
thought you w
of the old foun
the world did y
at that hour?"

"We were a la
we went out for a
we thought we s
see what your pa
the moonlight, an
passed. I got se
the rest, and came
accident, just as I
the extremely gho
your house, and

looks like the castle of Macbeth, or a scene from the opera. Do you know anybody here?"

"Hardly a soul? Do you?"

"No. Aunt Bluebell said it was our duty to come. It is easy for her to go out; she does not bear the burden of the conversation."

"I am sorry you find it a burden," said I. "Shall I go away?"

Miss Lammas looked at me with a sudden gravity in her beautiful eyes, and there was a sort of hesitation about the lines of her full, soft mouth.

"No," she said at last, quite simply, "don't go away. We

to, because we are
in the country."

I suppose I oug
thought Miss Lam
odd girl. There is
sort of freemasonr
people who discover
live near each other
they ought to have k
other before. But t
sort of unexpected
and simplicity in
amusing manner whi
have struck any one el
singular, to say the l
To me, however, it a

utterly happy when I met her at last, and could talk to her as much as I pleased. To me, the man of ill-luck in everything, the whole meeting seemed too good to be true. I felt again that strange sensation of lightness which I had experienced after I had seen her face in the garden. The great rooms seemed brighter, life seemed worth living; my sluggish, melancholy blood ran faster, and filled me with a new sense of strength. I said to myself that without this woman I was but an imperfect being, but that with her I could accomplish everything to which I should set my hand. Like the great

last, I could have
to the fleeting mome
doch, du bist so schö

"Are you alway
asked, suddenly. "
you must be!"

"The days would
seem very long i
gloomy," she answere
fully. "Yes, I thi
life very pleasant, an
so."

"How can you
anything?" I inquire
could catch my life ar
it, I would abuse it pro

melancholy temper. You ought to live out of doors, dig potatoes, make hay, shoot, hunt, tumble into ditches, and come home muddy and hungry for dinner. It would be much better for you than moping in your rook tower, and hating everything."

"It is rather lonely down there," I murmured, apologetically, feeling that Miss Lammas was quite right.

"Then marry, and quarrel with your wife," she laughed. "Anything is better than being alone."

"I am a very peaceable person. I never quarrel with anybody. You can try it.

"Will you let m
asked, still smiling.

"By all means—
it is to be only a
canter," I answered,

"What do you m
inquired, turning qu
me.

"Oh—nothing.
try my paces with
quarrelling in the futu
not imagine how you
to do it. You will
resort to immediate a
abuse."

"No. I will only s

man of your age talk of being melancholy, or of the hollowness of existence? Are you consumptive? Are you subject to hereditary insanity? Are you deaf, like Aunt Bluebell? Are you poor, like—lots of people? Have you been crossed in love? Have you lost the world for a woman, or any particular woman for the sake of the world? Are you feeble-minded, a cripple, an outcast? Are you—repulsively ugly?" She laughed again. "Is there any reason in the world why you should not enjoy all you have got in life?"

"No. There is no reason whatever, except that I am

"Then try big
a change," suggest
mas. "Try and
for instance, an
turns out."

"If it turned
would be rather se

"Not half so s
to abuse everythi
ably. If abuse is
lar talent, abuse so
ought to be abused.
Conservatives—or
—it does not m
since they are alw
each other. Make

a man of you. Fill your mouth with pebbles, and howl at the sea, if you cannot do anything else. It did Demosthenes no end of good you know. You will have the satisfaction of imitating a great man."

"Really, Miss Lammas, I think the list of innocent exercises you propose——"

"Very well—if you don't care for that sort of thing, care for some other sort of thing. Care for something, or hate something. Don't be idle. Life is short, and though art may be long, plenty of noise answers nearly as well."

"I do care for something—I mean, somebody," I said.

"I do not know
would marry me,'
"I have never aske
"Then ask he
answered Miss L
shall die happy if I
persuaded a melanc
creature to rouse
action. Ask her, b
and see what she s
does not accept yo
she may take yo
time. Meanwhile,
have entered for th
you lose, there are
aged Trial Stakes

into the bargain. Shall I take you at your word, Miss Lammas?"

"I hope you will," she answered.

"Since you yourself advise me, I will. Miss Lammas, will you do me the honour to marry me?"

For the first time in my life the blood rushed to my head and my sight swam. I cannot tell why I said it. It would be useless to try to explain the extraordinary fascination the girl exercised over me, or the still more extraordinary feeling of intimacy with her which had grown in me during that half-hour.

not timid, nor ever
to propose to marr
after half an hour's a
was a piece of madn
I never believed my
and of which I shou
capable again, could
in the same situatio
as though my whole
been changed in a
magic—by the whit
her nature brought i
with mine. The b
back to my hear
moment later I fou
staring at her with an

mouth smiled, and there was a mischievous light in her dark-brown eyes.

"Fairly caught," she answered. "For an individual who pretends to be listless and sad you are not lacking in humour. I had really not the least idea what you were going to say. Wouldn't it be singularly awkward for you if I had said 'Yes'? I never saw anybody begin to practise so sharply what was preached to him—with so very little loss of time!"

"You probably never met a man who had dreamed of you for seven months before being introduced."

"No, I never did," she

a romantic charac
I should think y
believed you. V
have taken my ac
for a Stranger's R
it. Try the All
Stakes. You have
and a pencil. Pro
Bluebell ; she woul
astonishment, and
recover her hearing

III.

THAT was how I first asked Margaret Lammas to be my wife, and I will agree with any one who says I behaved very foolishly. But I have not repented of it, and I never shall. I have long ago understood that I was out of my mind that evening, but I

of making me a sa
since. Her manne
head, for it was
from what I had ex
hear this lovely cr
in my imaginati
heroine of romance
tragedy, talking fa
laughing readily wa
my equanimity coul
I lost my head as
heart. But when I
to England in the
went to make certa
ments at the Cas
changes and im

for which I had entered myself so rashly, and we were to be married in June.

Whether the change was due to the orders I had left with the gardener and the rest of the servants, or to my own state of mind, I cannot tell. At all events, the old place did not look the same to me when I opened my window on the morning after my arrival. There were the grey walls below me, and the grey turrets flanking the huge building; there were the fountains, the marble causeways, the smooth basins, the tall box hedges, the water-lilies and the swans, just as of old. But there was some-

and in the greenness
not recognise—a li
everything by which e
was transfigured. T
in the tower struck s
the strokes of the an
sounded like a weddi
The air sang with the
treble of the song-bi
the silvery music of t
ing water, and the sc
mony of the leaves s
the fresh morning winc
was a smell of new-m
from the distant mead
of blooming roses from
below wafted up to

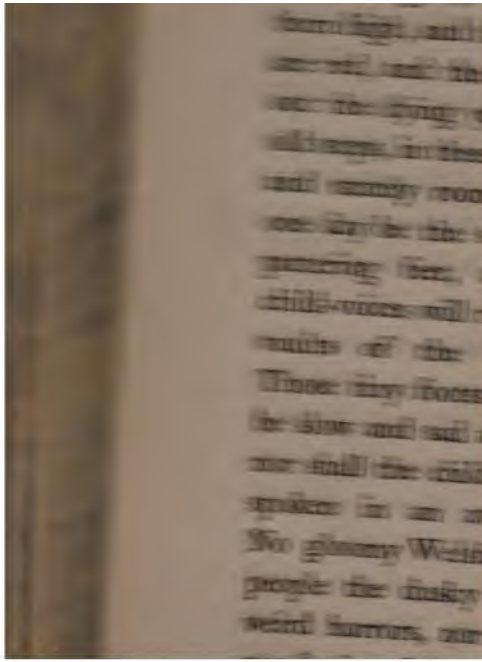
pure sunshine and drank the air and all the sounds and the odours that were in it; and I looked down at my garden and said, "It is Paradise, after all." I think the men of old were right when they called heaven a garden, and Eden, a garden inhabited by one man and one woman, the Earthly Paradise.

I turned away, wondering what had become of the gloomy memories I had always associated with my home. I tried to recall the impression of my nurse's horrible prophecy before the death of my parents—an impression which hitherto had been vivid enough. I tried to remember my own self, my

pointments. I end
force myself to thin
to think, if only to
self that I had not
dividuality. But I
in none of these effo
a different man,
being, incapable of
ill-luck, or of sad
life had been a drear
but infinitely gloomy
less. It was now a r
of hope, gladness, an
ner of good. My
been like a tomb ; to-
paradise. My heart
as though it had no

and youth, and the certainty of realised happiness. I revelled in the beauty of the world, and called loveliness out of the future to enjoy it before time should bring it to me, as a traveller in the plains looks up to the mountains, and already tastes the cool air through the dust of the road.

Here, I thought, we will live and live for years. There we will sit by the fountain towards evening and in the deep moonlight. Down those paths we will wander together. On those benches we will rest and talk. Among those eastern hills we will ride through the soft twilight, and in the old



and fresh, and joyful, and happy, and we will turn the old luck again, and forget that there was ever any sadness.

So I thought, as I looked out of my window that morning and for many mornings after that, and every day it all seemed more real than ever before, and much nearer. But the old nurse looked at me askance, and muttered odd sayings about the Woman of the Water. I cared little what she said, for I was far too happy.

At last the time came near for the wedding. Lady Bluebell and all the tribe of Bluebells, as Margaret called them, were at Bluebell Grange, for

come straight to
afterwards. We car
travelling, and not
a crowded ceremor
George's in Hanov
with all the tiresom
ties afterwards. I us
over to the Grange
and very often Marga
come with her aunt
of her cousins to the
was suspicious of my
and was only too glad
have her way about t
tions and improvemen
home.

the evening of the twenty-eighth Margaret drove over with some of the Bluebell party. In the long summer twilight we all went out into the garden. Naturally enough, Margaret and I were left to ourselves, and we wandered down by the marble basins.

"It is an odd coincidence," I said; "it was on this very night last year that I first saw you."

"Considering that it is the month of July," answered Margaret with a laugh, "and that we have been here almost every day, I don't think the coincidence is so extraordinary, after all."

pose not. I don't
it struck me. W
likely be here a y
day, and a year
The odd thing, whe
it, is that you shoul
all. But my luck
I ought not to thi
odd that happens
have you. It is al
good."

"A slight chan
ideas since that rem
formance of yours
said Margaret.

most charming woman I had ever seen. I naturally did not want to lose any time in frivolities. I took you at your word, I followed your advice, I asked you to marry me, and this is the delightful result—what's the matter?"

Margaret had started suddenly, and her hand tightened on my arm. An old woman was coming up the path, and was close to us before we saw her, for the moon had risen, and was shining full in our faces. The woman turned out to be my old nurse.

"It's only old Judith, dear—don't be frightened," I said. Then I spoke to the Welsh-

Judith? Have you
ing the Woman of th
"Ay—when the cl
Willie—my lord, I m
tered the old creatur
aside to let us pass,
her strange eyes on
face.

"What does she
asked Margaret, whe
gone by.

"Nothing, darlin
old thing is mildly c
she is a good soul."

We went on in sil
few moments, and ca
rustic bridge just a

dark and swift in its narrow channel. We stopped, and leaned on the wooden rail. The moon was now behind us, and shone full upon the long vista of basins and on the huge walls and towers of the Castle above.

"How proud you ought to be of such a grand old place!" said Margaret, softly.

"It is yours now, darling," I answered. "You have as good a right to love it as I—but I only love it because you are to live in it, dear."

Her hand stole out and lay on mine, and we were both silent. Just then the clock began to strike far off in the

—eight—nine—ten
I looked at my wa
—thirteen—I lau
bell went on striki

"The old cloc
crazy, like Judith,"
Still it went on,
note ringing out m
through the still air.
over the rail, i
looking in the direc
the sound came. C
went. I counted ne
dred, out of sheer cu
understood that som
broken, and that th

a heavy splash, and I was alone, clinging to the broken end of the rail of the rustic bridge.

I do not think I hesitated while my pulse beat twice. I sprang clear of the bridge into the black rushing water, dived to the bottom, came up again with empty hands, turned and swam downwards through the grotto in the thick darkness, plunging and diving at every stroke, striking my head and hands against jagged stones and sharp corners, clutching at last something in my fingers, and dragging it up with all my might. I spoke, I cried aloud, but there was no answer. I was alone in the pitchy black-

house was five hundre
away. Struggling still
the ground beneath m
saw a ray of moonlig
grotto widened, and t
water became a broad a
low brook as I stumbl
the stones and at l
Margaret's body on th
in the park beyond.

"Ay, Willie, as th
struck!" said the v
Judith, the Welsh nurse
bent down and looked
white face. The old
must have turned bac

groaned, "you have fed the Woman of the Water this night, Willie, while the clock was striking."

I scarcely heard her as I knelt beside the lifeless body of the woman I loved, chafing the wet white temples, and gazing wildly into the wide-staring eyes. I remember only the first returning look of consciousness, the first heaving breath, the first movement of those dear hands stretching out towards me.

That is not much of a story, you say. It is the story of my life. That is all. It does not pretend to be anything else.

says
turned on that summ
when I was struggl
water to save all that
living for. A mo
there was a stone bri
the grotto, and Marg
stood on it, and looked
moonlit Castle, as we
once before, and as
done many times sin
all those things happ
years ago last summer,
is the tenth Christmas
have spent together
roaring logs in the c
talking of old times; an

gold hair and dark-brown eyes like their mother's, and a little Margaret, with solemn black eyes like mine. Why could she not look like her mother, too, as well as the rest of them?

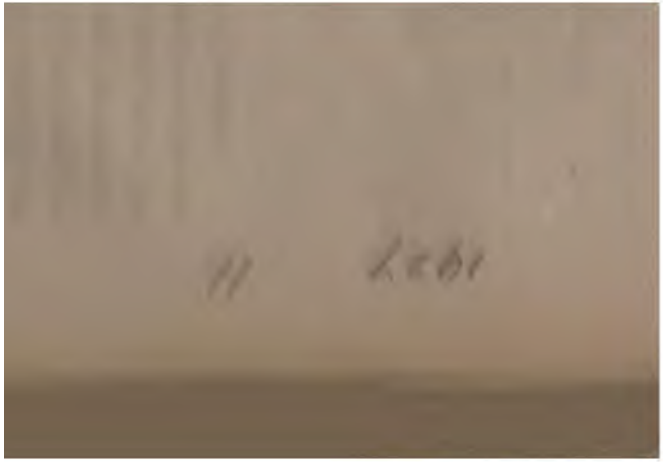
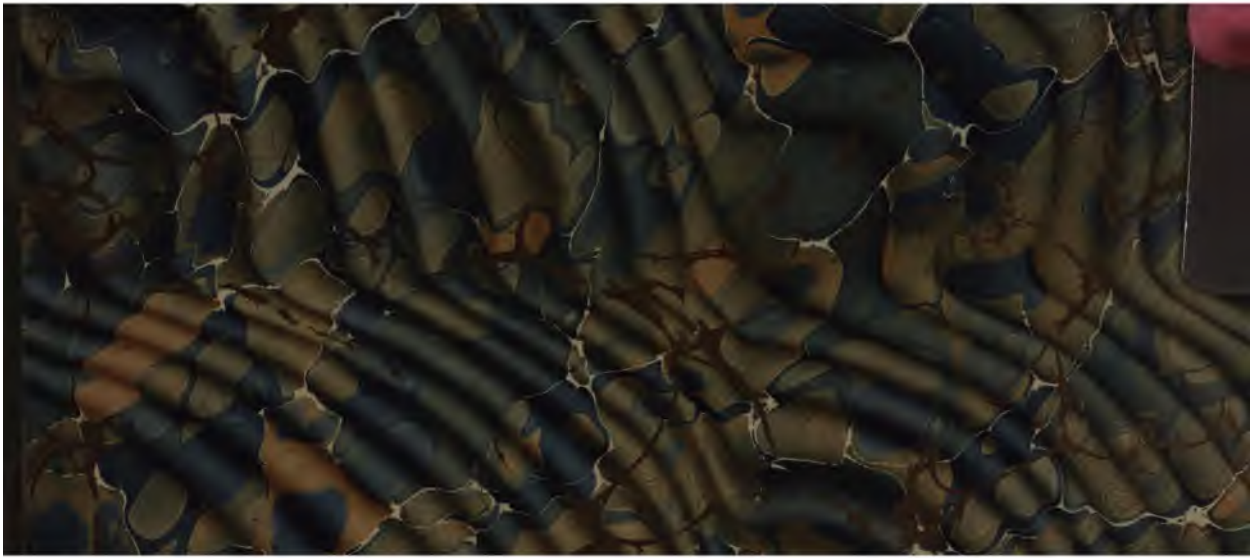
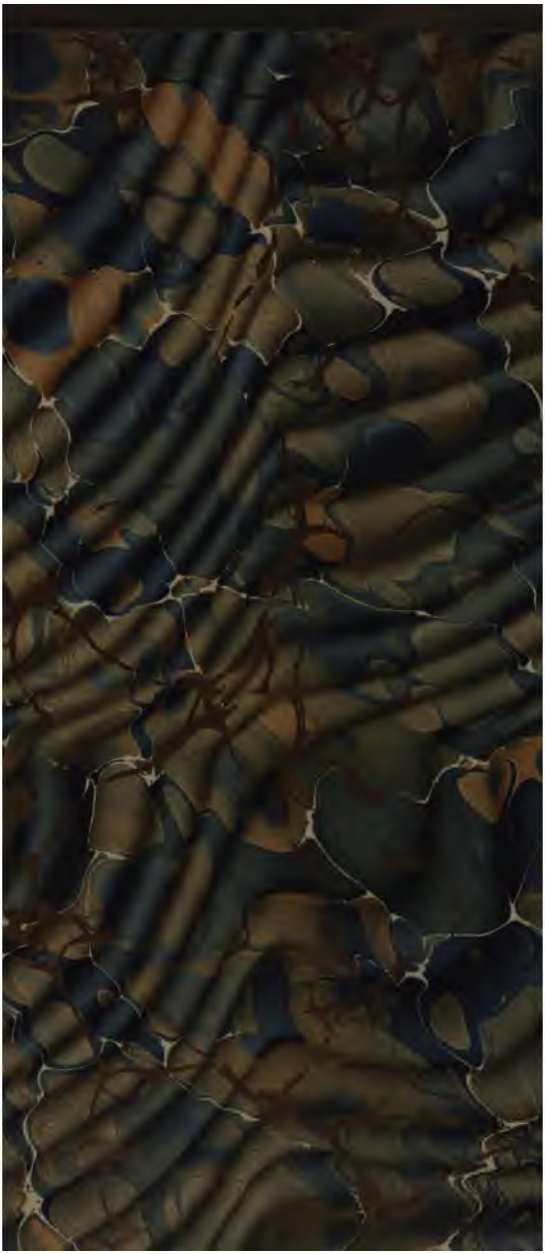
The world is very bright at this glorious Christmas time, and perhaps there is little use in calling up the sadness of long ago, unless it be to make the jolly firelight seem more cheerful, the good wife's face look gladder, and to give the children's laughter a merrier ring, by contrast with all that is gone. Perhaps, too, some sad-faced, listless, melancholy youth, who feels that the world is very hollow, and that life is

may take cour
example, and hav
woman of his h
to marry him a
hour's acquaintan
the whole, I woul
any man to ma
simple reason that
ever find a wife lik
being obliged to go
will necessarily fare
wife has done mira
will not assert that
woman is able to
example.

Margaret always

I daresay she is right. She has even more imagination than I. But I have a good answer and a plain one, which is this—that all the beauty of the Castle comes from her. She has breathed upon it all, as the children blow upon the cold glass window-panes in winter; and as their warm breath crystallises into landscapes from fairyland, full of exquisite shapes and traceries upon the blank surface, so her spirit has transformed every grey stone of the old towers, every ancient tree and hedge in the gardens, every thought in my once melancholy self. All that was old is young, and all that was sad is glad,

Whatever heaven ma
is no earthly paradi
woman, nor is there
place so desolate, so
unutterably miserabl
woman cannot mak
heaven to the man
and who loves her.

I hear certain cyn
and cry that all that
said before. Do not
good cynic. You
small a man to laugh
great thing as love.
have been said before
many, and perhaps
yours, too. I do

them. You say that the world is bitter, and full of the Waters of Bitterness. Love, and so live that you may be loved—the world will turn sweet for you, and you shall rest like me by the Waters of Paradise.